

## Message Text

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ACTION LAB-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

NSAE-00 SIL-01 PM-04 DODE-00 /036 W

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R 231206Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8607

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 THE HAGUE 3985

DEPT PASS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB MILI NL

SUBJECT: MILITARY UNIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS

REF: STATE 163207

1. MILITARY ASSOCIATIONS OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER DATE BACK AT LEAST TO THE TURN OF THE CENTURY IN THE NETHERLANDS. MANY OF THE EARLIER ASSOCIATIONS, SOME OF WHICH CONTINUE IN EXISTENCE, WERE FORMED TO PROMOTE THE INTERESTS OF THEIR MEMBERS AND OF THE NETHERLANDS ARMED FORCES. IN THIS REGARD, MOST DUTCH ASSOCIATIONS WERE AND ARE NOT GREATLY DIFFERENT FROM SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, I.E., THE ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY, THE RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION AND THE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS ASSOCIATION. BUT, IN THE LAST DECADE, NEW ASSOCIATIONS AND NEW MILITANCY HAVE BECOME ATTRACTIONS FOR MANY IN THE DUTCH ARMED SERVICES.

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2. THE PERIOD OF THE EARLY AND MID-1960'S WAS ONE OF GREAT CHANGE IN THE NETHERLANDS AS REFORM MOVEMENTS, NEW POLITICAL PARTIES, ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS, AND CAUSES IN GENERAL PROLIFERATED. IT WAS A TIME OF THE PROVOS IN AMSTERDAM, A CURIOUS MOVEMENT OF DUTCH FLOWER CHILDREN, BOTH YOUNG AND NOT-SO-YOUNG, PROFESSING A GENERAL ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT THEM COUPLED WITH AN AVERSION TO THE AUTOMOBILE. PROVO-INSPIRED DEMONSTRATIONS AND RIOTS PUT AMSTERDAM ON THE FRONT PAGES OF THE WORLD'S NEWSPAPERS. DEMOCRATIZATION OF DUTCH SOCIETY BECAME A DRIVING ISSUE IN THE COUNTRY. IN THE UNIVERSITIES, LABOR UNIONS, BUSINESS AND ELSEWHERE, DEMOCRATIZATION AND ITS COROLLARY "INSPRAAK," GIVING THE INDIVIDUAL A DIRECT SAY IN ALL DECISION-MAKING MECHANISMS WHICH IMPACT ON HIM PERSONALLY, CAME TO BE GENERALLY ACCEPTED IN THE NETHERLANDS. THE DUTCH MILITARY SERVICES DID NOT ESCAPE THE PHENOMENON.

3. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE TWELVE MILITARY ASSOCIATIONS WHICH NOW HAVE CONSULTATION RIGHTS WITH THE DUTCH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, IT IS USUALLY THE DUTCH CONSCRIPTS ASSOCIATION (VERENIGING VAN DIENSTPLICHTIGE MILITAIREN), THE VVDM, WHICH DUTCHMEN AND FOREIGNERS THINK OF WHEN THEY REFER TO DUTCH MILITARY UNIONS.

EASILY THE LARGEST AND MOST MILITANT OF THE ORGANIZATIONS, THE VVDM IS FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES AN OPERATING TRADE UNION ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT ENJOY ALL OF THE RIGHTS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH UNIONS. THE NEXT THREE PARAS OF THIS CABLE WILL CONCENTRATE ON THE VVDM, LEAVING THE OTHER ELEVEN ASSOCIATIONS ASIDE EXCEPT FOR A GENERAL LISTING IN PARA 11. BEGINNING WITH PARA 7 WE DISCUSS RIGHTS AND PROCEDURES AVAILABLE TO ALL OF THE ASSOCIATIONS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THEY ARE EXERCISED BY ALL.

4. THE VVDM WAS ORGANIZED ON AUGUST 4, 1966, FOR THE PURPOSE OF IMPROVING AND GUARANTEEING THE POSITION OF THE MILITARY CONSCRIPT, TAKING CARE OF THE INTERESTS OF DRAFTEES, AND FUNCTIONING AS THE CONTACT BETWEEN DRAFTEES AND CIVILIAN AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES. ARTICLE 5 OF ITS STATUTE SAYS THAT THE VVDM TRIES TO REACH ITS GOALS BY NEGOTIATIONS WITH CIVILIAN AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES AIMING AT IMPROVING THE LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE MILITARY FORCES; PROVIDING INFORMATION, UNCLASSIFIED

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AID AND ASSISTANCE TO DRAFTEES; AND BY ALL OTHER LEGAL MEANS. MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO ALL CONSCRIPTS (OFFICERS AND RANKS), DRAFTEES WHO HAVE COMPLETED SERVICE, AND HONORARY MEMBERS.

5. BY MINISTERIAL DECREE, THE GON RECOGNIZED THE VVDM ON NOV 22, 1968, AND AGREED TO "CONSULTATIONS" IN ORDER THAT THE MOD WOULD BE "COGNIZANT OF THE VIEWS AND DESIRES OF THE ASSOCIATION" AND SO THAT THE ASSOCIATION COULD BRING TO THE

ATTENTION OF THE MOD "MATTERS OF GENERAL INTEREST TO MILITARY CONSCRIPTS." THIS WAS A RATHER INNOCUOUS BEGINNING, BUT OTHER CHANGES SOON FOLLOWED. LESS THAN A YEAR LATER THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE ORDERED THAT EXTRA LEAVE OR EXEMPTION FROM DUTIES BE GRANTED TO ALL VVDM OFFICIALS WHO WERE NEEDED TO PARTICIPATE IN CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS. THE SECRETARY, TREASURER AND TWO OTHER MEMBERS OF THE VVDM GENERAL COMMITTEE WERE TO BE POSTED ABOVE COMPLEMENT TO AN ARMY UNIT WHICH WOULD MAKE AVAILABLE OFFICE SPACE TO ALLOW THEM TO PERFORM THEIR FUNCTIONS. THESE FOUR VVDM OFFICERS WERE EXEMPTED FROM ALL DUTIES AND WERE GIVEN COMPLETE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT PROVIDED THEIR WHEREABOUTS WERE KNOWN TO THE COMMANDER OF THEIR HOME ARMY UNIT. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE WERE GRANTED TWO DAYS A MONTH EXTRA LEAVE FOR UNION ACTIVITIES, AND ALL VVDM MEMBERS WERE GIVEN TWO EXTRA LEAVE DAYS PER YEAR TO ATTEND GENERAL MEETINGS.

6. THE VVDM IS HEADED BY THE GENERAL COMMITTEE AND BY A DAILY GOVERNING BOARD. THERE ARE TEN DISTRICT COORDINATORS IN THE NETHERLANDS AND TWO FOR DUTCH UNITS STATIONED IN THE FRG. THERE ARE MORE THAN 100 LOCALS IN HOLLAND AND GERMANY. AT THE LOCAL LEVEL, THE VVDM PARTICIPATES, ALONG WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM OTHER ASSOCIATIONS OR INTERESTS, IN COMPANY AND BATTALION CONSULTATION COMMITTEES. THE COMMITTEES ARE

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07

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R 231206Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8608

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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AUTHORIZED TO CONSULT WITH THE COMMANDING OFFICERS ON ALL  
MATTERS RELATING TO SERVICE CONDITIONS AND THE WORKING CLIMATE.

7. DUTCH MILITARY "UNIONS" DERIVE THEIR BASIC RIGHT TO EXISTENCE FROM ARTICLE 9 OF THE DUTCH CONSTITUTION WHICH GUARANTEES THE RIGHT TO FORM ASSOCIATIONS, SECTION 11 OF THE 1950 EUROPEAN CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, AND SECTION 12 OF THE MILITARY PUBLIC SERVANTS ACT WHICH PRESCRIBES THAT REGULATIONS WILL BE ISSUED SETTING OUT THE MANNER IN WHICH MILITARY ASSOCIATIONS ARE ABLE TO MAKE THEIR OPINIONS KNOWN TO THE AUTHORITIES. THERE ARE ASSOCIATIONS FOR OFFICERS, NON-COMMS, CORPORALS AND CONSCRIPTS (FFDM) AS WELL AS ASSOCIATIONS OPEN TO ALL RANKS. MEMBERSHIP IN ALL IS VOLUNTARY AND, IN THE CASE OF SOME ASSOCIATIONS SUCH AS THE VVDM, A SYSTEM OF DUES CHECK-OFFS HAS BEEN AGREED UPON.

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8. DUTCH MILITARY ASSOCIATIONS DO NOT HAVE THE RIGHT TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT ABOUT WAGES BUT DO HAVE THE RIGHT OF CONSULTATION. PROMULGATION OF REGULATIONS AFFECTING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL DOES NOT REQUIRE CONSENT FROM THE ASSOCIATIONS, BUT, IF SUCH REGULATIONS TOUCH UPON THE LEGAL STATUS OF THE PERSONNEL, THEY HAVE NO STANDING IF THEY WERE ARRIVED AT WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATIONS. DUTCH SERVICEMEN AND ASSOCIATIONS OF SERVICEMEN HAVE THE RIGHT TO ASSEMBLE ON MILITARY INSTALLATIONS WITH THE CONSENT OF THE COMMANDER. STRIKES BY PUBLIC SERVANTS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE NETHERLANDS. DEMONSTRATIONS BY MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE PERMITTED ON INSTALLATIONS WITH APPROVAL OF THE COMMANDER. THEY ARE ALSO PERMITTED OFF POST, BUT THERE ARE REGULATIONS AGAINST THE WEARING OF UNIFORMS DURING DEMONSTRATIONS.

9. DURING THE PAST DECADE, DUTCH MILITARY ASSOCIATIONS (PRIMARILY THE VVDM) HAVE SUCCESSFULLY "BARGAINED" FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF REGULATIONS ENDING THE REQUIREMENT FOR SALUTING, FOR MAINTAINING A SPIT-AND-POLISH APPEARANCE (LONG HAIR AND RUMPLED UNIFORMS ARE NOW THE RULE AMONG CONSCRIPTS, INCLUDING MANY OFFICERS) AND FOR RESTRICTIONS REGARDING OFF-DUTY TIME. PERSONNEL OF THE NETHERLANDS ARMED FORCES NOW WORK A STANDARD DUTY WEEK CORRESPONDING TO THAT IN THE

CIVILIAN SECTOR AND, WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS FOR REQUIRED SERVICES, ARE FREE TO DO ASAS THEY PLEASE OUTSIDE THOSE HOURS. WAGES AND ALLOWANCES FOR THE LOWEST RANKS CORRESPOND ROUGHLY WITH THE LEGAL MINIMUM WAGE.

10. MILITARY ASSOCIATIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS DO NOT HAVE DIRECT TIES TO ANY TRADE UNION CONFEDERATIONS ALTHOUGH THE VVDM MAINTAINS CONTACT WITH BOTH THE DUTCH TRADE UNION FEDERATION (FNV) AND THE PROTESTANT TRADE UNION FEDERATION (,:). THE ASSOCIATIONS ALSO MAINTAIN THEIR INDEPENDENCE FROM DUTCH POLITICAL PARTIES. NEARLY ALL OF THE ASSOCIATIONS LOBBY FOR THEIR PARTICULAR GOALS AND OCCASIONALLY MAKE COMMON CAUSE.

11. FOLLOWING ASSOCIATIONS ARE RECOGNIZED BY THE DUTCH MINISTRY OF DEFENSE:

ORGANIZATION	YEAR OF FOUNDATION	MEMBERS
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ASSOCIATION OF NAVAL OFFICERS	1947	3300
ASSOCIATION OF OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS ARMY AND THE ROYAL NETHERLANDS	1910	2600
GENERAL CHRISTIAN OFFICERS ASSOCIATION	1971	1500
GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF NETHERLANDS RESERVE OFFICERS	1917	2000
ASSOCIATION TO PROTECT AND SUPPORT THE INTERESTS OF NAVAL AND FORMER NAVAL PERSONNEL NOT HOLDING AN OFFICERS RANK	1901	15,7000
ASSOCIATION OF THE MILITARY POLICE	1907	4100
"ONS BELAND," ROYAL ASSOCIATION OF N.C.O.'S	1898	7800
CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL	1975	5000
"ST. MARTINUS," ROMAN CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION OF MILITARY PERSONNEL UNDER THE RANK OF SECOND-LIEUTENANT	1911	6300
NATIONAL CORPORALS ASSOCIATION	1965	5600
GENERAL ASSOCIATION NETHERLANDS SOLDIERS	1972	6700
ASSOCIATION OF CONSCRIPTS (VVDM)	1966	27,300
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## Message Attributes

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